

Marantz AV8805

Steve Withers gets to grips with Marantz's multitalented, multichannel AV processor



MARANTZ'S AV8805 IS a technological statement of intent, a 13-channel AV processor boasting just about every feature imaginable. Not only does it support Dolby Atmos and DTS:X, it also handles Auro-3D – making it the only preamp to decode all three immersive audio formats at anything approaching a sensible price.

Some will own the previous AV8802A and wonder if they should upgrade. What's new here beyond the expansion to 13.2 channels? HEOS multiroom, Amazon Alexa voice command support, and eARC ability. Although, if you like having a built-in AM/FM tuner, you might want to keep your AV8802A because Marantz has dropped it here.

The processor has a minimalist design with almost no controls actually visible. There's just an input selector, volume dial and circular display. The fascia is hewn from a solid piece of aluminium.

The rear view is more daunting, with a bewildering number of inputs and outputs. There's actually a total of seventeen outputs using a choice of either phono or balanced XLR. It can only decode a total of thirteen channels at any one time, but the extra outputs allow for different speaker

configurations. AV connections include eight HDMI inputs and three HDMI outputs, all v2.0b.

On the multimedia side, there's built-in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, plus Ethernet, and support for Apple's AirPlay and Spotify Connect, along with HEOS multiroom.

Audyssey MultEQ XT32 EQ is reasonably effective but lacks the sophistication of Dirac Live, which is used by Arcam and Emotiva, or Trinnov's bespoke EQ. I'd recommend assigning levels manually and setting the individual crossovers for each speaker.

Scaling new heights

The AV8805 can upscale soundtracks to 7.2.4, so I started with the 4K BD of *Dunkirk*, a go-to 5.1 disc. The Marantz delivered the action scenes with wonderful aggression, taking full advantage of the headroom in my amplification to deliver a dynamic experience. It opened up the soundstage in a way that felt totally organic, sounding like an Atmos mix, even though I knew it wasn't.

The scream of the Stuka bombers terrifies, and the subsequent explosions add plenty of well-integrated bass impact. There was also a subtlety to the processing, with the sounds of wind and surf on the beaches rendered with a pleasing sense of realism.

On to an actual Atmos track. *Gravity* (Blu-ray) has a highly directional object-based mix that's a test for effects steering and tonal balance. Dialogue often slips around the room in a 360-degree soundfield, and the AV8805 did a wonderful job of moving the voices and

SPECIFICATIONS

DOLBY ATMOS: Yes **DTS:X:** Yes **THX:** No
MULTICHANNEL INPUT: Yes. 7.1 phono inputs
MULTICHANNEL PRE-OUT: Yes. 15.2 phono and XLR
MULTIROOM: Yes. 2 x zones **AV INPUTS:** 4 x digital audio (2 x optical, 2 x coaxial)
HDMI: Yes. 8 x inputs; 3 x outputs **VIDEO UPSCALING:** Yes **DIMENSIONS:** 440(w) x 410(d) x 185(h)mm **WEIGHT:** 13.7kg

FEATURES: Audyssey MultEQ XT32; Auro-3D; ISF certification; iOS and Android apps; HEOS multiroom; Alexa voice control; DLNA networking; Ethernet; Wi-Fi; Bluetooth; USB; AirPlay; internet radio; Spotify Connect; eARC; HDCP 2.2; HDR10; HLG; Dolby Vision; 192kHz/32-bit DACs; Pure Direct mode; DSD, FLAC, WAV and ALAC

effects from speaker to speaker, creating a three-dimensional soundstage around my seating position. And during the almost soundless scenes in space, its ability to subtly feed my dual woofers was key to the drama.

Of course we don't always want our bass to be subtle, so next up was *Blade Runner 2049* (Ultra HD BD) with its foundation-shaking Atmos mix. The AV8805 conjured a bass performance that was smooth and even, yet powerful. It also added impact but never smothered everything else, which is exactly what bass should do.

Once again, the precision in terms of effects localisation and steering was impressive, with spinners flying overhead and height channels being used to craft a crushing sense of claustrophobia when the action moves to street level.

With *Jurassic World* (Ultra HD BD) the outdoor scenes found the Marantz able to form a huge soundstage with enough depth, width and height to contain the film's palaeontological stars. When the Indominus Rex attacks the Asset Containment Team, there's gunfire, explosions and deafening roars, and impressive use of dynamic range. However, within this sonic cacophony, specific effects are deliberately given more weight. It's a great in-a-nutshell sequence that proves this processor's poise and power.

As updates go, the AV8805 makes sense. The AV8802A was never under-endowed, but this aims higher (literally) with its additional channels and HEOS integration. It's a superb pre-amp, combining audiophile components with state-of-the-art processing. It sounds incredible with movies, and is equally adept with music ■

HCC VERDICT



Marantz AV8805

→ £3,600 → www.marantz.co.uk

WE SAY: Marantz puts the audiophile into home cinema with a state-of-the-art 13.2-channel preamplifier loaded with features.